The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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For the Myrtle.

Polly Gray.

N a decayed tree on the island of Cuba was a nest containing three little parrots. This was closely watched by a young Cuban, and when the little birds were strong enough to leave the nest, he took them to his house. Then commenced their education. He taught them to shake hands, to bow gracefully, to chatter in Spanish, which was his own language, and many other things ; and when he considered their education complete he offered them for sale. An American gentleman bought the handsomest one for a pet for his delicate little son, and Polly was destined to relieve the tedium of long hours of sickness. This was a noble mission, and Polly performed it as well as she could. It was pleasant for the sick child to have such a beautiful bird ever by his side, and Polly became very much attached to her little master. She ate with him, standing upon the edge of the table at his side, and learned to keep her food upon her plate, and use a napkin to wipe her claw and bill as well as anybody. Indeed she was not satisfied to wipe the outside alone, but cleaned the inside as well, and then took the napkin in her little claw and laid it carefully upon the table again.

She tried very hard to use a spoon and fork as her master did, taking them up in her claw, but found them too heavy and was obliged to give it up. She would stand upon one foot and hold her bread in the other to her mouth, and when she had eaten enough would put the remainder back upon her plate.

The sick boy was very happy with Polly, she had such cunning little ways ; but the time came when he did not need her any more. He went a long journey with the dear Savior, who came for him and carried him to a beautiful country where there is no sickness, and where he could play always in the green fields, for there is no night there, and no fatigue. There all the little sick children are made well, and have beautiful homes and joyous days, and the flowers bloom all the year, for no deep snows or cold winds ever reach that happy home.

Poor little Polly had to be left behind. She did not understand it, and scolded loudly in Spanish, and called her little master until his father saw that it was making the mother sad all the time; so he gave her away to a sailor lad to take to his brothers and sisters, the children of a poor widow that lived in a village not far from Boston. Polly took the long journey from Cuba, and when the lad went away again Polly was left behind. Polly was very much offended at this. She thought that something was very wrong, and felt that she must do all she could to right it; so every time the lady came near she bit her as hard as she could.

Of course this did not make things any better, as Polly had to be whipped and put out in the yard upon a small tree. Then Polly would scold as loud and as fast as she could, though no one could understand her, but the noise she made drew all the little boys of the village about her, and they thought it was very funny to get a long stick and poke her, and hear her say: "go 'way! go 'way! go 'way, boys!"

The boys trampled upon the flowers in their eagerness to see Polly, and the lady thought she had received a very troublesome present; for if she sent the children away they soon came back again, and if she tried to take Polly into the house she was sure to receive a bite.

One day Polly sat upon the tree tormented by the boys, as usual, and scolding at them at the top of her voice, when Bessie Gray came in sight.

She pitied the poor friendless bird, and reached out her hand to it with caressing words. "Take care!" shouted the boys, "she will bite." But Polly did not bite. She reached out her claw to Bessie to shake hands, and would not let go, but clung with both claws to Bessie's hand, and cuddled her little head against Bessie's cheek. It was a case of love at first sight.

Bessie carried her into the house and told the lady how the boys were tormenting her. When the lady tried to put her into the cage she clung to Bessie and screamed, and threatened to bite any one else. So Bessie smoothed her ruffled feathers, kissed her and put her in the cage and talked to her some time. "O, I wish I could have her," she said, when she felt obliged to tear herself away.

"I think I shall be obliged to sell her," said the lady, "she makes me so much trouble; and if I do you shall have the first chance."

Two hours later the son of the widow called at Bessie's house to say that his mother would sell the bird for six dollars, if Bessie wanted it.

Bessie was delighted at this. She had a little money of her own, and soon coaxed enough from her father, by giving a glowing account of poor Polly's sorrows and attainments.

Mr. Gray thought that a bird that spoke two languages, and was such a miracle of accomplishments, was very cheap at that price.

In a few minutes the money was paid over, and as soon as Bessie came into the room, Polly flew from the top of the cage into her arms, and they danced triumphantly home together, Bessie talking soft nonsense to Polly, and Polly creaking with pleasure all the way, the happiest little pair in the State.

Bessie lived a mile from the village, so Polly found that she had escaped from her troubles, and she and her little mistress had nice times together. She would sit upon Bessie's shoulder, or her finger, and they would go into the woods and have long walks and confidential chats together. Bessie would say: "Poor little Polly!" in the most compassionate tone, and Polly would repeat it in a piteous little voice.

Then Bessie would say: "Pretty Polly, O pretty little Polly," in a merry tone, and Polly would repeat the words, imitating the tone exactly. It sounded very funny to hear her say as though lost in admiration of herself, "O! O! pretty little Polly." She was a little inclined to be egotistical, and would not say good bye Bessie, but always, "Good bye, Polly." She would climb upon Bessie's head and dress her hair, as she did her own feathers, being very careful not to pull, and put up her bill to Bessie's mouth to kiss, talking all the time "Pretty Polly. Want a cracker Polly? Want to come in? Want to play croquet? Good bye Polly. Poor little Polly. Want to come to dinner?" Then she wonld sometimes sing a funny little tune in a soft cracked voice, like a very old lady, and then whistle, as though calling a dog, and she could cackle precisely like a hen.

Bessie tried to teach her to sing "Good bye Annie darling, break off from your sorrow." Polly caught the tune very soon, but always persisted in singing it: "Good bye Polly," with a little pause to fill out the measure; then she would commence "Cra kor"—for break off—but then came a long pause. Polly either could not or would not remember any further.

One day Bessie was starting for school, and,

having some important communication to make, called from the yard: "Mother, are you up stairs?" Polly was sitting upon a rose trellis looking quietly around. A few moments after, Bessie's mother heard another call :—Mother, are you up stairs? and went to the window to reply. Nobody was there but Miss Polly, who, when she saw that her roguery had succeeded, burst into a loud laugh.

She was very patronizing to the canary, repeating to him the caressing words so often addressed to himself: "Poor Polly. What's the matter, Polly? Pretty little Polly," ending by calling "Polly' Polly, Polly, Polly, Polly," as fast as she could speak the words.

Once Polly was sitting upon the back of a chair in the dining room, and Tommy Gray came into the room. Tommy Gray was the remarkable cat whose portrait, life and adventures appeared in the MYRTLE some time ago. He was always very polite to Polly, but Polly seemed to think she had something against him, so she climbed from her perch, crept softly behind him and bit the tip of his tail. Tommy looked quickly about to see who was insulting him, and then walked off into the parlor with a great assumption of dignity, with Polly's laugh ringing in his ears. Polly often attempted to perform the same feat, but Tommy knew too much to be caught the second time, and when he saw Polly coming towards him would go quickly out, for he scorned the idea of revenge, though he sometimes looked exceedingly annoyed. Tommy was magnanimous as well as amiable.

I think that Polly was a very decided puzzle to Tommy. She could speak so plainly, and sing and laugh so naturally, and yet showed such a marked antipathy to his petted self. Polly was sometimes disposed to be friendly with Tommy; then she would walk up to him, make a low bow and hold her head down to be scratched.

Polly enjoyed standing upon the window seat to watch the people pass.

When a carriage came in sight she would make three low bows, and her politeness extended to oxen and donkey carts also, but if a boy appeared she immediately manifested her disapproval by turning her back towards him.

When Bessie went to school she usually left Polly upon the rose trellis where she would sit contentedly until Bessie came again. The trellis was long enough for quite a walk for Polly across it, and she enjoyed climbing from the top to the bottom and back again and to peck the twigs; She would stand there for hours, imitating every sound she heard.

She would caw like the crows, and then laugh an amused little soft laugh, and say "O dear!" as though she thought it absurdly funny.

One day Bessie returned from school, and the first thing she did was to look for Polly, as usual, but no Polly was to be found. She sought the yard and garden over, but Polly was not there, and examined the trees in the vicinity, with no better success. Very much alarmed she called the family and begged them to assist her. The darkness came on, but no little Polly came for her supper, and Bessie was not the only member of the household that went to bed in tears.

All kinds of sad fates were discussed. Some boy might have stolen her, or a hawk carried her away, or a hunter's dog killed her. There was a little room for hope in the thought that she might have been frightened at something and had flown to the woods and been unable to find her way back.

The next morning, before breakfast, with a sort of forlorn hope in her heart, Bessie went to the trellis and called as loudly as she could "Polly, Polly, Polly."

"Crick! crick! Pretty little Polly. Want to come to dinner," answered Polly not very far away—but she did not come.

After a few moments search, guided by her voice, Miss Polly was found—and where, do you think? *In the pig pen.* A boy had called upon an errand. He swung his hat at her, and she flew away from him, she did not care where, and landed in the pig pen, and being tired and frightened, either went to sleep, or else amused herself with the new creatures she had found, and decided to spend the night. In either case she proved the truth of the proverb "A person is known by the company he keeps," for she grunted and snored all the next day.

Every morning as soon as any one was up Polly wanted her cage opened, and then the hall door, and she would climb up the stairs as fast as she could go, to find Bessie.

She would hook her bill on the stairs above her, and then draw her feet up and say "crick," which meant "Here I am," and then up the next until she had climbed the two long flights to Bessie's room. Then she got upon the towel rack where she could see Bessie and called to her, and talked until she awoke.

When Bessie had had Polly some years, it became necessary for her to go to school away from home and leave her little pet. This was a great grief to Bessie, but Polly did not mind it.

She would call Bessie every day, but when she found she did not come, she transferred her affections to Bessie's sister Ellen, who took care of her.

Bessie had always taken excellent care of Polly, denying her articles of food liable to injure her health, and training her up in the way she should go, in every respect; but Ellen was more indulgent. If Polly wanted meat at the dinner table, Ellen would not deny her as Bessie had done, but gave her all she wished for. Polly enjoyed this freedom, but by and by she was taken sick.

Ellen then reduced her to bread and seed diet again, but it was too late; after drooping for several days little Polly died, to the sorrow of all that knew her.

Bessie's father had Polly sent to Boston and preserved—not with sugar—but with chemicals, in some way that I do not understand, to preserve her beauty. So Bessie has now a little embalmed Polly that looks as though she could speak, but never does.

Bessie says she knows that when she goes to Heaven Polly will meet her at the gate, and say the first thing: "Want to come in?"

Mrs. O. D. Miller.

For the Myrtle.

Stratford on Avon.

THIS is the picture of the spot where the great poet, Shakspeare, lies buried. It is the Avon river that glides so still and placidly along through the green trees and among the cottages of the old town of Stratford, in England. And in the old brown church yard with its tall tower that stands so close to the river's side and makes so charming a picture, as you see, is the tomb where Shakspeare's dust with that of his family reposes. Almost all other great and famous Englishmen are buried at Westminster Abbey, but he at his own request was laid to rest in his own village. And so the whole place is made sacred as the grave of the great poet.

And how much better is this! At Westminster he would have had a crowded corner, his name surrounded and almost made dim by so many others to whom the place equally belonged. But here in his own village, Shakspeare's is the one great and only name. And here amid the beautiful scenes he loved, and sleeping with the friends who knew and loved him in life, it seems as though he must find the sweetest rest.

All places in God's world are good, but none so good to us as the place of our birth, where we have lived and where our friends and kindred are. No friends are ever like the old friends, no home like the early home, no scenes ever quite so fair as those our childish eyes looked on. We may wander over all the earth, and our name be known in many lands as Shakspeare's was, but if we could choose the place of our rest at last it would be like his, in our own village, amid the scenes we have loved, and the friends to whom our name is dear and our memory sweet.

Shakspeare thought so much of this that in writing his epitaph he pronounced a curse on any one who should move his bones from that sacred spot. And in his own beautiful Stratford-on-Avon, in the same old church that stood when he lived three hundred years ago, he still sleeps.

H. A. B.

Artie's Birds.

I've a story for darling Metta,
With eyes of heaven's own blue,
And the very best part of my story
Is, that every word is true.

'Tis about my dark-eyed Artie,
And the birds he loved so well,
Before the angels took him,
To their beauteous home to dwell.

One day, as we sat by the window—
Two birds were building a house,
And for fear they might be timid,
We were both "as still as a mouse."

And in and out of the locust,
With ripples and snatches of song,
Bringing and fastening the rafters,
They labored the whole day long.

'Twas a week—one bright May morning,
When, peeping into the nest,
We saw four blue eggs hidden
Under the mother-bird's breast.

And again, a few days after,
Four wide open mouths were there,
And four little unfledged birdlings,
Needed the mother-bird's care.

Then days passed by unnoticed,
When forth from the locust tree
There came such wonderful music—
Music, for Artie and me.

When my beautiful Artie heard it,
He shouted in childish glee:
"Auntie, the *birds are tinging—*
'Ittle birds tinging for me!"

Artie passed under the shadow—
He sleeps 'neath the willow tree—
But in dreams oft I hear him saying,
"*Ittle birds tinging for me!*"

Mrs. M. M. B. Goodwin

Fable.

"COME let us run a race!" said a rose, springing up beside a Maple tree. "Let us see which will reach the sky first?"

"Agreed," said the Maple. "Are we even?"

"Just even," murmured a breeze, passing by and bending the young trees together.

"I am sure I can grow the fastest," said the Rose, her leaves all in a tremor with delight, for it was a sunny day.

"I think I shall grow the surest," said the Maple, slowly.

"How I would like to soar up into the blue sky like that grand poplar tree, and stand, to-night, with my head among the stars," said the Rose. "Come! let us be hurrying on!"

So, on that fair summer's day, the two young trees started on their journey, side by side, toward the sky. For awhile, the breeze, that kissed them every evening and bent them together, whispered, "just even." But the Rose, as she had said, could grow the fastest, and before summer was over, stood far above the Maple.

The Maple had stopped growing. It was not dead, but only making sure of its summer's work by preparing for winter. It covered all of its tender stems and buds with plates of crimson mail which even the fiercest darts of cold could never pierce. But the Rose did not stop to do this work, she was in such a hurry to grow. She said she would have plenty of time to prepare for winter when she heard that winter was coming.

Winter came, and finding the Rose weak, and only half protected, cut her down to the earth. But the Maple braved freshly the cold winds and storms. Winter could not undo the Maple's work for every step was strong and sure.

The next summer the race commenced over again, the Rose catching up and winning awhile, as before, then was beaten back to the earth by winter storms she had come only half provided for. The Maple only rose a few steps higher, but, patiently, made those few steps sure.

Years passed by, and this lovely April day, the Maple waves a cloud of scarlet blossoms against the fair bosom of the all-embracing sky. Birds drop down from the clouds into the Maple's branches, and make the great tree thrill with their wild, glad joy.

The Rose is scarcely higher than when she first commenced the race. To-night, when she looks up to the crown of stars encircling the the glorious Maple's head, she will sigh sorrowfully to the wind of how she once thought to wear a starry crown.

Surely, the race is not to the swift.

—*What next.*

Pledge.

"You complain of my taking the pledge, said a reclaimed man to an acquaintance who blieved in freedom in everything, and that a man should drink when he wants to. Why, man, strong drink led me to have more to do with pledging than ever teetotalism has. When I used strong drink, I pledged my coat, I pledged my bed, I pledged in short, everything that was pledgable, and was losing every hope and blessing, when a temperance friend convinced me of my folly. Then I pledged myself, and soon got many things out of pledge."—*The Christian at Work.*

Our Sunday Schools.

MASSACHUSETTS.

—At the meeting of the Boston Associations at Beverly, the second week of May, Rev. G. J. Sanger made an excellent address on "Methods of Sunday School work."

—A letter from Newburyport has the following paragraph:

"Our society under the ministry of our excellent young pastor —Br. Drew—is doing exceedingly well. Nearly every seat in the house is let, and the people are much interested in the services of the pulpit. Our Sunday School has adopted the 'One Lesson System,' which works well thus far. We have Teacher's meetings every Wednesday evening, when the lesson for the following Sabbath is carefully considered, and our Teachers are thus enabled to make the lesson quite plain to the scholars. Br. Drew has quite a large Bible Class connected with the School. The same lesson is tanght in his class, and all seem to be interested in the same subject.

MAINE.

—At Steuben a parish was organized April 30th, with sixty members. A Sunday School with forty members is now in successful operation.

—Westbrook Seminary had a happy May-Day with a "May Queen" after the old English custom. A social reception in the evening closed the day.

NEW YORK.

—Our Sunday School in Watertown, gave a very successful concert on the evening of Easter Sunday. Many of the recitations were selected from back numbers of *The Guiding Star*; among which was "The Little Twin Sister," which, a correspondent says, "was the crowning piece of the evening." The closing piece was the late Rev. D. K. Lee's "Twelve Tribes of Israel," spoken by twelve young ladies. "From the least to the greatest," the children did well. This is one of the best Sunday Schools in Northern New York.

PENNSYLVANIA.

— A recent Philadelphia paper says: On Tuesday evening the three Sabbath Schools connected with the Universalist Churches of this city celebrated the anniversary of the formation of the Universalist Sunday School Union at the Church of the Restoration. The church was handsomely decorated with cut and uncut flowers worked into a variety of devices, and quite a number of canary birds, in gilded cages, not only made music, but added to the beauty of the decorations. The exercises consisted of singing by the combined schools, by Scripture reading, prayers and addresses, the Rev. Howard Malcolm (Baptist,) Col. D W. C. Moore (Dutch Reformed), Dr. E. G. Brooks and Revs. Abel C. Thomas, B. F. Bolles and P. C. McCarthy (the four latter Universalists,) taking part in the ceremonies. During the evening a large number of floral tokens were presented to the speakers and to sundry others, and the whole affair was one long to be remembered. The children sang charmingly, the spreches were short, stirring and good, and everybody seemed to be in the best humor. The Committee of Arrangements consisted of Rev. James Shrigley, chairman, and Messrs. Russell, Deemer and Mohr, the superintendents of the several schools.

— The church at Pittsburgh having given the late pastor an elegant gold watch as a parting gift, the Sunday School supplemented it with a chain of corresponding value.

GEORGIA.

—In Jackson County, we learn from Rev. B. F. Strain, is a church of our faith with a small Sunday School.

Also at Salem, Cherokee County, is a church with Rev. Mr. Rhyne as pastor, the most prosperous of any in the state. The same is true of the Sunday School which has the pastor for its Superintendent. It is probably the best Universalist Sunday School in the South.

TEXAS.

—A Universalist Sunday School has been organized in Bastrop County, in this distant State by the labors of Rev. M. Gardner.

Letter from Norwich Conn.

DEAR EDITOR :—I know of no better way of showing our appreciation of the MYRTLE than the increased st of subscribers for the new volume, and this is an indication also of increase in numbers and interest in the Sunday School. When the Church sends orders to the "Publishing House" for hymn books and the School for more MYRTLES it is a pretty sure sign of prosperity. But I want to tell you of a Concert given by our school last evening under the direction of the pastor and superintendent, assisted by the choir.

Notwithstanding it rained hard during the afternoon and was very unpleasant in the evening, the church was filled to its utmost capacity. The singing by the children and choir was fine and among the other exercises were the following noticable featnres. Recitations were given by Misses Georgia Tourtelotte, Lillie Twiss and Master Willie Wells showing great proficiency. Moselle Lewis, a little four year old spoke with all the self possession and clearness of a "Livermore," while Ida Ruby and Dwight Austin, two other wee things, seemed at ease on the platform. The effect of the latter's address was about $12, from the pockets of the audience for the benefit of the school. The "Beatitudes" were represented by eight young ladies with good effect, and a duett was well rendered by Misses. Ella Marvin and Lu. Mead. Fannie Pollard, not yet in her teens, sang a pathetic ballad to the delight of all. She has a sweet contralto voice and the naturalness of her style, and power for one so young has made her a favorite at our concerts.

Our pastor closed the concert with fitting remarks on the power exerted in the world by *children's* sermons such as we had listened to, after which everybody present sang "Dismission's with a will.

Truly yours,

"SUBSCRIBER."

Sunday School Libraries.

The attention of Sunday Schools about purchasing books for their libraries, is called to the fresh and fine stock of books for sale by the Universalist Publishing House. All the books have been carefully examined, and we offer no books to Sunday Schools which contain sentiments not in harmony with the faith of Universalists. Selections have been made from the publications of all booksellers. Should it be more convenient to send for books than to make a selection personally, we are confident of giving perfectly satisfactory selections.

The Myrtle for 1872-3.

The volume of THE MYRTLE for 1872-3 has just closed, and bound volumes of it are for sale at the Universalist Publishing House. Price, $1 50.

Those who have saved the numbers for the year, can have them bound in the fine style of the volume of last year, for 75 cents.

Lives of the Apostles.

LESSON XIV.—JOHN.

NOTE. It is a peculiar trait of the modesty of St. John, that he frequently avoids mentioning occurrences in which he took a prominent part. Therefore, we may conclude that John was one of the first two who followed Jesus.

Question. — Who were with John the Baptist when he pointed to Jesus and called him "the Lamb of God?"

Answer. — John i, 35, 36.

Q. — Did these two disciples of John the Baptist, follow Jesus?

A. — John i. 37.

Q. — What was the name of one of them?

A. — John i. 40.

Q. — Who probably, was the other?

Q. — Why did they remain with Jesus at his abode, over night?

A. — John i. 39.

NOTE. The tenth hour would be four o'clock in the afternoon.

Q. — To what part of the country is it probable that John with the other disciples whom Jesus called, followed the Master?

A. — John i, 43.

Q. — What miracle did John probably see performed?

A. — John ii. 1-11.

Q. — What effect did this miracle have upon the disciples?

A. — John ii. 11.

Q. — To what city in Gailee did Jesus go with his disciples?

A. — John ii. 12.

Q. — What miracle did Jesus perform there?

A. — Matt. viii. 5, 6.

Q. — Where did Jesus go next?

A. — John ii. 13.

NOTE. Three of the apostles were present with Jesus in important periods of his life, and these three are Peter, James and John.

Q. — Mention the first instance recorded when John with Peter and James were present with Christ.

A. — Mark v. 23, 37.

Q. — Mention the second event when John was present with the other two.

A. — Matt. xvii. 1, 2.

Q. — On what other occasion were the three with Jesus?

A. — Matt. xxvi. 36, 37.

Q. — Who of the twelve followed Jesus after his arrest?

A. — John xviii. 15.

NOTE. This is another of the instances in which John abstains from giving his own name.

Q. — How far did John follow his Master?

A. — John xviii. 15.

Q. — Why was John admitted into the high priest's palace?

A. — John xviii, 15.

Q. — Who only of the twelve followed Jesus to the cross and stood by until he died?

A. — John xix. 25, 26.

Hidden Seed

Enigma.

I am composed of 30 letters.
My 17, 24, 4, 18, 20, denied the Lord.
My 9, 27, 28, 18, 13, 12, 4, 29, 10, 7, was written by St. Paul.
My 1, 11, 25, 3, was a prophet.
My 14, 24 28 6, one of the sons of Jacob.
My 23, 19, 22, 21, 5, 22, is where Abraham dwelt.
My 18, 14, 29, was a high priest.
My 15, 21, 20, 10, 22, was brother to Moses.
My 3, 1, 30, 28, 1, 4, 6, 25, 22, is free.
My 3, 27, 9, 16, 18, 22, 4, is a reptile.
My 10, 8, 26, is an adverb of place.
My 2, 18, 24, is an insect.
My whole is a command of Paul to the Thessalonians.

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